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Helping Organizations Retain Their Most Valuable Asset

## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

### *Tips to Prevent Colds and Flu*

A proactive approach to warding off colds and flu is apt to make your whole life healthier. The most effective way to prevent the flu, is to get the flu shot. There are other strategies you can employ as well.

- **Wash Your Hands.** Most cold and flu viruses are spread by direct contact. The germs can live for hours only to be picked up by the next person who touches the same object.
- **Drink Plenty of Fluids.** Water flushes your system, washing out the poisons as it rehydrates you. A typical, healthy adult needs eight 8-ounce glasses of fluids each day.
- **Get Fresh Air.** A regular dose of fresh air is important, especially in cold weather when central heating dries you out and makes your body more vulnerable to cold and flu viruses.
- **Don't Smoke.** Statistics show that heavy smokers get more severe colds and more frequent ones. Even being around smoke profoundly zaps the immune system
- **Cut Alcohol Consumption.** Heavy alcohol use destroys the liver, the body's primary filtering system, which means that germs of all kinds won't leave your body as fast.
- **Relax.** If you can teach yourself to relax, you can activate your immune system on demand. Train yourself to picture an image you find pleasant or calming.

Source: WebMD Inc.

## *Are You Suffering From Anxiety or Panic Disorder?*



Anxiety disorders affect approximately 19 million American adults. If you or a family member is suffering from excessive or chronic anxiety, read the information below to help you understand the root cause of your anxiety, review the "symptom checklist," and learn how to recover.

### *The Relationship Between Stress And Anxiety Disorders*

When we talk about stress and its relationship to anxiety disorders, we are really referring to two different kinds of stress. External stress is generated or caused by something tangible and real. It could be brought on by something as traumatic as someone trying to physically hurt you. It could be brought on by something as simple as watching a disturbing television program. Marriage, career change or having a baby are all good examples of external stress. In other words, there is a valid reason for the stress. However, you can control your response to the stressor.

Internal stress is generated by your concern about the external stressor and the way it is making you feel. It is self-imposed stress; you only experience this stress if you choose to. Internal stress is based on our emotional response to the external stress and includes our self-talk, anger and obsessive, scary thinking. Normal, everyday stress can bring on body symptoms - racing heart, dizziness, trembling, etc. What the anxiety prone individual will do at this time is add internally generated stress on top of an already uncomfortable situation. He or she begins with self-talk like, "What's wrong with

me? Am I going to faint? What if I lose control and do something stupid and embarrass myself? I'm so dumb, why did I let this happen?"

It is internal stress that gets us into trouble. It's from this internally generated anxiety that we get obsessive and carried away, scaring ourselves with untrue thoughts and imagined scenarios, which only add to our uncomfortable symptoms. This is the reality of the anxiety sufferer. Anxiety disorders commonly include: generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, agoraphobia and post-traumatic stress disorder.

### *Symptom Checklist*

People suffering from anxiety, panic, agoraphobia and post-traumatic stress disorder often complain of the following:

- ☐ strong anxiety episodes
- ☐ racing heart/chest discomfort
- ☐ trembling
- ☐ nausea
- ☐ hot and cold flashes
- ☐ feelings of unreality and disorientation
- ☐ dizziness
- ☐ scary, uncontrollable thoughts
- ☐ depressed feelings
- ☐ fatigue
- ☐ feelings of helplessness
- ☐ panic episodes
- ☐ muscle tension
- ☐ migraine headaches
- ☐ numbness in various parts of the body
- ☐ strange aches or pains

24 Hours a day: 800-343-2186 [www.hmsincorp.com](http://www.hmsincorp.com)

### *Common Treatments*

While anti-anxiety and anti-depressant medications are often prescribed for anxiety and related disorders, learning to manage internally generated stress is at the heart of complete recovery. Medications help with the symptoms of anxiety, but they do nothing to affect the cause of the distress, which stems from the thought and behavioral habits of the sufferer. Through a process of conditioning, the anxiety sufferer develops certain automatic responses to thoughts, feelings and external stimulus.

The anxiety sufferer is conditioned to think and respond inappropriately to stressors in his/her environment. Cognitive, behavioral therapies are often employed to help bring the attention of the sufferer to the unrealistic thoughts that serve as cues for his or her maladaptive behavior. This includes examination of irrational beliefs and expectations, automatic thoughts, assumptions and responses, negative imagery and general perception to feelings.

The goal of cognitive behavioral therapies is to correct people's self and environmental misconceptions, strengthen their coping skills and feelings of control over their own lives while facilitating exercises to develop constructive self-talk.

### *HMS is here to help*

If you or a family member is suffering from excessive or chronic anxiety, Human Management Services (HMS) can help you with professional counseling, referrals and information. Remember, all HMS services are prepaid by your employer and strictly CONFIDENTIAL. If you need help, why not call an HMS counselor today? We're here to help you.

## *Managing Workplace Stress*

### *What's the Problem With Perfectionism?*



Can you recognize the difference between striving for excellence and pursuing perfection? Certainly it is a good thing to have high standards and give your best effort at work. Perfectionists, however, have difficulty recognizing when enough is enough.

The perfectionist is driven by more than the desire to do well. Perfectionists equate their self-worth with achievement and flawless performance. To feel good about themselves, they must produce perfect work and see their mistakes as evidence of their lack of self-worth. In their pursuit of perfection – which is unattainable – perfectionists end up feeling bad about themselves most of the time, no matter how much they achieve.

Because perfectionists are driven to keep trying until they get things “perfect,” they often get hung up on meaningless details and spend more time on projects than necessary. The result? According to a 10-year study of over 9,000 managers and professionals, perfectionism at work makes for reduced job performance, depression, alienated colleagues and stress-related illness.

### *Are you suffering due to your own desires to be perfect?*

- You feel constant pressure to achieve
- You criticize yourself when you're not perfect
- You feel you haven't done enough no matter how hard you try
- You either want to do something “just right,” or not at all
- You demand perfection from other people

If any of the statements above feel familiar to you, you could struggle with perfectionism. To eliminate perfectionist thinking, begin by recognizing the difference between an acceptable level of performance and the need to achieve perfection. Some tasks do deserve meticulous preparation and execution, but most projects can be completed on time with a more realistic effort.

**HMS Is Here To Help:** If workplace perfectionism in the – either your own or that of your boss or a co-worker – is causing difficulty in your life, call Human Management Services (HMS) for confidential counseling, referrals or information. We're here to help.

## HMS SERVICES

### PROVIDED BY YOUR EMPLOYER FOR YOU AND YOUR DEPENDENTS

This confidential prepaid program is designed to help employees and their eligible dependents resolve problems which may be interfering with their personal, work or home life. HMS offers help for marital and family issues, substance abuse, job concerns, emotional problems, life adjustments, legal issues, financial matters, and elder care and child care referrals.

If you're experiencing problems which are causing concern, you and your HMS counselor can work as a team to find solutions.

Call HMS for Help:

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